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ration for the time bestowed. The finest ornaments for a lady, consisting of necklace, ear-rings, and brooch, cost forty pounds. For a picture of Paestum, eight feet long, and twenty inches broad, on which four men were occupied for three years, £1,000 sterling was asked.

I shall now notice the mosaic work of Florence. It differs entirely from Roman mosaic, being composed of stones inserted in comparatively large masses; it is called work in *pietra dura*. The stones used are all more or less of a rare and precious nature. In old specimens the most beautiful works are those in which the designs are of an arabesque character. The most remarkable specimen of this description of *pietra dura* is an octagonal table in the *Gabinetto di Baroccio*, in the Florence Gallery. It is valued at £20,000 sterling, and was commenced in 1623 by Jacopo Detelli, from designs by Ligozzi. Twenty-two artists worked upon it without interruption till it was terminated in the year 1649. Attempts at landscapes, and the imitation of natural objects, were usually failures in former times, mere works of labour, which did not attain their object; but of late works have been produced in this art, in which are represented groups of flowers and fruit, vases, musical instruments, and other compatible objects, with a truth and beauty which excite the utmost admiration and surprise. These pictures in stone are, however, enormously expensive, and can only be seen in the palaces of the great. Two tables in the Palazzo Pitti are valued at £7,000, and this price is by no means excessive. These are of modern design, on a ground of porphyry, and ten men were employed for four years on one of them, and a spot is pointed out, not more than three inches square, on which a man had worked for ten months. But Florentine mosaic, like that of Rome, is not merely used for cabinets, tables, or other ornamental articles; the walls of the spacious chapel which is used as the burial-place of the reigning family at Florence are lined with *pietra dura*, realising the gem-encrusted halls of the Arabian tales. Roman mosaic, as we have seen, is of great value as an ally to art; but Florentine mosaic can have no such pretensions, and time and money might be better bestowed. The effect is far from pleasing in the chapel I have alluded to, and I think that the art might be advantageously confined to the production of small ornaments, for which it is eminently adapted.—*The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*.

### SEALS OF IRISH CHIEFS.

An Essay read at a Meeting of the Royal Irish Academy,  
by George Petrie, R.H.A., M.R.I.A.

HAVING a few months since succeeded in deciphering an ancient and somewhat difficult inscription on the seal of a distinguished Irish chief, which the Dean of St Patrick's had but just previously added to his magnificent collection of our national antiquities, it occurred to me that a notice of this seal, and of a few others of the same class, preserved in that collection and in my own, might be somewhat interesting to the Academy, and at the same time prove useful in showing the importance of forming collections of this kind. In an assembly so enlightened as that which I have the honour to address, it would be impertinent to offer any remarks on the value of ancient seals, not only as evidences of the truth of history, both local and national, but also as illustrations of the state and progress of the arts in times past. As has been justly remarked, it is from the great seals of England that we have been supplied with the surest criteria for estimating the progressive advancements made in architectural taste, and the various successive phases which it has from time to time exhibited in the country; and if all other historical evidences were lost, this alone would perhaps be sufficient to compensate for the want. The importance of this branch of archaeology has indeed been felt and acknowledged in every other country of Europe, in proportion to the progress which it has made in civilization and refinement; and we should perhaps feel some mortification at being necessitated to confess that in Ireland alone it has hitherto received scarcely any attention. I shall not say that this neglect on the part of our antiquaries has arisen from a distaste for investigations which, as they require merely a little learning and common sense, allow no indulgence for the mind to soar into the dim and distant upper regions of romance and fanciful conjecture, where such qualities would be found but weighty and earthly incumbrances. A sufficient reason may be found in the fact, that until very recently there were no collections of antiquities of this

class in existence to which investigators could refer; and hence, if the Irish antiquary had been only a few years back asked the question whether the Irish ever had the use of signets commonly among them, he would have been constrained to confess his inability to give an answer. Such a question, however, can be replied to now in a more satisfactory manner. It is ascertained that not only the Irish kings and petty princes, from the period of the Anglo-Norman conquest, used signets, but also that they were common among persons of inferior rank. It can be also shown that such signets closely resembled in style and device those of the Anglo-Normans of similar ranks. Still, however, from the imperfection consequent on the recent formation of our collections of antiquities, the era at which seals began to be used in Ireland remains undecided; for although we have no seals of an earlier age than the thirteenth century, it would be as yet premature to conclude that none such ever existed. Till a recent period it was the opinion of the English antiquaries generally that the use of signets was unknown to the Saxons, and was introduced into England by the Normans; and this opinion was grounded on the fact that no Saxon seals had ever been discovered. But of late years there have been found seals, unquestionably of the Saxon times; and no doubt can now be reasonably entertained of their general use among that people; and hence, although no seals of coteremporaneous with the Saxon times have as yet been met with in Ireland, the similarity that prevailed between the two countries in customs, and in knowledge of the arts, would very strongly warrant the conclusion that the use of signets could not have been unknown or perhaps uncommon in Ireland.

To these prefatory remarks I have only to add, that though the use of signets was common not only among the Greeks and Romans, but also among the earlier civilized nations of the East, we have no evidence that such a use had ever been introduced into Ireland by its original colonists.

With these few general introductory observations I shall now proceed to exhibit to the Academy the seals which it appeared to me desirable to bring under their notice.



The first, unfortunately, I can only exhibit in a drawing, as the original is not now known to exist. It is the seal of Felim O'Conor, who was allowed by the English government to bear the hereditary title of king of Connaught in the thirteenth century, and the legend is *S. Fedlimid Regis Conactie*. The impression of this seal has been published in Ware's *Antiquities*, where it is adduced as an evidence that some of the Irish chiefs retained the title of king subsequently to the Anglo-Norman conquest. The following is the passage in which the statement occurs:—

"Thus far the kings of Ireland, who lived before the arrival of the English under King Henry II, but even after that period, some, though subjects, enjoyed the regal title, and were styled kings even by the kings of England. For Hoveden cites the following passage under the year 1175. *Hic est Finis et Concordia*, &c. 'This is the final end and concord, which was made at Windsor on the octaves of St Michael in the year of grace 1175, between our Lord Henry king of England, son of the Empress Maude, and Roderick king of Connaught, by Catholiceus, Archbishop of Tuam, and Cantord, Abbot of St Brendan, and Master Laurence, chancellor of the king of Conaught, viz., that the king of England grants to the said Roderick, his liege man, king of Conaught, that as long as he shall faithfully serve him, he shall be king under him, ready to do him service as liege man, &c.' The letters patent of king Henry II., by which he committed the management of his Irish affairs to William Fitz-Adelm, his sewer, shew us the rank in which these nominal kings were at that time placed. They begin thus: '*Henricus*, &c. Henry by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitain, and earl of Anjou, to the arch-

bishops, bishops, kings, earls, barons, and to all his faithful subjects of Ireland, greeting.' It appears also out of the close roll An. 6th of king John in the Tower of London, that the successor of Roderick was in like manner called king of Conaught. So in the close roll of the 5th of Henry III, some of the king's letters patent were directed, among others to K. king of Conaught, and to O. king of Kinel-ean; and in the following year the same king granted to the king of Tosmond the land of Tosmond. For thus it is in the charter roll of the 6th of Henry III, Membr. 2. 'Rex, &c. The king to the king of Tosmond, greeting. We grant unto you the land of Tosmond, (i. e. Thumond) which you formerly held at the farm of 130 marks, to be held of us until we come of age.' Concerning the suit exhibited at London by Fedlimid O'Connor before K. Henry III. and his court, see Matthew Paris under the year 1140, where that writer calls him "*Petty King of that part of Ireland, which is called Cunnoch, i. e. Conaught;*" and that Fedlimid himself took upon him the name of king of Connaught, appears from his seal, the impression of which is exhibited to the reader, plate I. No 3.—[It appears by the Lord Stafford's letters (c.) that the seal here mentioned was presented to King Charles I. in the year 1636.]

From the letter here alluded to, which was addressed to Lord Strafford by Secretary Cooke in 1636, it appears that this seal was presented by Sir Beverley Newcomen to the king in person, by whom, as the letter states, the seal was much esteemed, and well accepted. As this seal is not known to exist at present, it may be supposed that it was lost in the civil wars which followed so soon afterwards.

As the life of Felim O'Connor constitutes a portion of the general history of Ireland, it is unnecessary for me to advert more in detail to it, than to mention that he was elected to the throne of Connaught by the English of that province in 1230, was deposed by them in 1232, was restored again soon afterwards, died in 1265, and was interred in the abbey of Roscommon, where a magnificent tomb was raised over his remains, which is still to be seen. His death is thus recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters:—"1265. Felim, the son of Charles the red-handed O'Connor, defender and supporter of his own province and of his friends on every side; expeller and plunderer of his enemies; a man full of hospitality, valour, and renown; patron of the orders of the clergy and of men of science; worthy heir to the throne of Ireland for his nobility, justice and valour, wisdom, personal shape, and love of truth; died after extreme unction and penance, in the monastery of the Dominican Friars at Roscommon, which he himself had granted to God and that order."

It will be observed that the style and device of this seal are very similar to those of the Norman and Anglo-Norman seals of the same age; and it can scarcely admit of doubt that its type was derived from that source. As to its general form, we have no description left; but a nearly cotemporary seal of a king of Desmond, which I have now the honour to exhibit will probably enable the Academy to form an accurate idea of it.



This seal, which is from my own cabinet, is, as the inscription shows, the seal of Donald Og, the son of Donald Roe Mac Carthy, who, as appears from the notices in the Irish and English authorities, became king or lord of Desmond by the murder of his father, Donald Roe, in 1306, or, as some accounts state, in 1302, and was himself killed in 1309. The legend runs thus:—*S. Dovenaldi : Og : Fili : D : Roth Mac Carthy.* The name of this prince appears in the pedigree of the Mac Carthy family as fifteenth in ascent from the last Earl of Clancarty and the thirtieth in descent from their great ancestor Oilíoll Olum. It will be seen that its device is very similar to that of the king of Connaught, but the form of the letters in the inscription indicates a somewhat later age. This seal was found about twenty years ago in the county of Cork, and was purchased originally by a watchmaker in that city.



The next seal that I have the honour to exhibit is from the collection of the Dean of St Patrick's, and is that to which I made allusion at the commencement of this paper. It was discovered by that zealous collector among some old silver in a jeweller's shop. In its general features it is similar to the seals already noticed, but the character of the letters in the legend indicate a still later age; and this circumstance, unimportant as it may appear, is of consequence, as it enables us with certainty to determine its owner, which would otherwise have been with difficulty ascertained, as there were two chiefs of the name in the legend in the family to which it belongs. The inscription on this seal reads thus:—*Si. Mac Con, ducis de Ui Cassin.* The territory called Hy-Caissin comprehended a considerable tract of the ancient Thomond in the county of Clare, of which the Macnamaras were hereditary lords; and the Mac Con whose name appears on this seal is found in all the pedigrees of that illustrious family, as the 28th in descent from Oilíoll Olum, the common ancestor of the Mac Carthys, O'Briens, and other princely families of Munster. According to the Annals of Innisfallen, which are the best authority for the history of Munster, the first Mac Con Mara was elected to be chief head of the tribe of O'Coilean in 1313; and again, at the year 1315, it is stated that Macnamara, and Mahon the son of Cumea, went to the tower of De Clare to compel him to enter into an agreement, which De Clare acceded to, to give Mac Con and his heirs the cantred of Ua Caissin, the charters whereof had been given to De Clare. The second Mac Con, to whom as I conceive this seal should be assigned, and who was grandson to the former, became chief of Hy-Caissin about the year 1340, and died about ten years afterwards.

[The remainder of this article shall be given in an early number.]

## THE GIRLS OF THE WEST.

ATR—"Teddy ye gander."

You may talk, if you please,  
Of the brown Portuguese,  
But, wherever you roam, wherever you roam,  
You nothing will meet,  
Half so lovely or sweet,  
As the girls at home, the girls at home.

Their eyes are not sloes,  
Nor so long is their nose,  
But, between me and you, between me and you.  
They are just as alarming,  
And ten times more charming;  
With hazel and blue, with hazel and blue.

They don't ogle a man,  
O'er the top of their fan,  
Till his heart's in a flame, his heart's in a flame,  
But though bashful and shy,  
They've a look in their eye,  
That just comes to the same, just comes to the same

No mantillas they sport,  
But a petticoat short,  
Shows an ankle the best, an ankle the best,  
And a leg; but, O murder!  
I dare not go further,  
So here's to the West, so here's to the West.

—From "Charles O'Malley."